

Differential Diagnosis. By Richard C. Cabot, M. D.
Published by W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia. 1911.

The absence of works dealing with and only with differential diagnosis has certainly confronted all medical students and all physicians who take the time and trouble to "read up" their obscure cases. To be sure, such classics as those of Musser and Sahli, or of von Leube on Diagnosis, have proven of invaluable assistance to those more or less experienced in clinical medicine, but until the publication of Neuser's monographs on Dyspnoea and Tachycardia, and Schmidt's book on "Pain," no attempts were made to study medicine from the point of view of the "presenting symptom."

This is what Cabot has undertaken. He shows "how the complaints of the patient—fragmentary expressions of the underlying disease—should be used as leads, and how their lead can be followed to the actual seat of the disease."

He presents lists of the common causes of the most common "presenting symptoms," classified in order of their frequency, and illustrates them by case histories. Such "presenting symptoms" as headache, lumbar pain, general abdominal, epigastric, right and left hypochondriac, right and left iliac, and axillary pains, pains in the arms, legs and feet; fevers, chills, coma, convulsions, weakness, cough, vomiting, hematuria, dyspnoea, jaundice and nervousness, are covered. The subjects are exceedingly well dealt with. No attempts are made to introduce diagnostic rarities, but only such cases as occur frequently in daily practice, but which nevertheless, as everybody knows, require skill in diagnosing.

A careful perusal of the entire book will more than repay one for the outlay of time. Case histories, well presented, are always interesting and usually instructive.

The reviewer can only hope that reading this book will convince the average practitioner that it is only by taking a careful history—and taking it in writing, if you please—by adding to this a thorough physical examination, with frequent recourse to laboratory assistance, that accurate diagnoses can be made, and rational methods of treatment instituted.

R. B.

Skin and Venereal Diseases. Miscellaneous Topics.
Practical Medicine Series, Vol. IX, 1910. Edited by W. L. Baum, M. D., and H. N. Moyer, M. D.
The Year Book Publishers, Chicago.

This small volume contains brief reviews of a great variety of subjects which have appeared in recent literature and on account of its nature cannot be reviewed here in the usual manner. It is divided into two sections, the first of which has four chapters devoted to various dermatoses and dermatological therapeutics. There are also brief accounts of some current literature on syphilis and genito-urinary diseases respectively. The second section contains references to miscellaneous subjects, medico-legal, historical and biographical.

There is much condensed, interesting and instructive information crowded into the 239 pages of this book that may prove of value to those unable to see the original articles on which the work is based.

H. E. A.

Chronicles of Pharmacy. By A. C. Wootton, Vols. 1 and 2. Published by McMillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1910.

Beginning with the Pharmacy of the Bible and in the Time of the Pharaohs, and showing its association with Theology, Mythology, Magic and Fable, the History of Pharmacy is chronicled in a most interesting, entertaining and instructive way. Lightly, but faithfully passing over the myths of pharmacy, rapidly reviewing its standing among the ancient Hebrews, Greeks and Romans, tracing its history among the Arabs and noting its work and

its progress on the continent, the author soon places pharmacy in England where with data comparatively fresh and provable, his account becomes more historical and more definite.

The "Chronicle of Pharmacy" is practically the history of early medicine, and the author shows how it was the enterprise, the close observation and crude experiments of the pharmacist that supplied the physician with his remedies and no doubt stimulated him in his researches. Unfortunately early rivalry and early jealousies soon gave rise to ill-feeling, dispute and bitter strife, so that the English literature in the 17th and 18th centuries still echoes the rancor of the strife. It is strange how the same controversies, the same jealousies and the same "charges" caused the troubles of the past that cause them to-day. Innumerable pamphlets of that day accused the apothecary of counter prescribing, of high prices, of extortion and of dividing his profits with friendly physicians. On the other hand the physician was accused of creating a "Doctors' Trust" of extorting extra and unnecessary fees from patients and by preventing the apothecary from supplying remedies, even emergency remedies, endangering the life of the sick and certainly seriously taxing both rich and poor. So serious were the charges and so deeply interested the general public, that numerous laws regulating the practice of the two professions and their mutual relationship were enacted and physicians were even forbidden to be interested in apothecaries. The war might still be going on were it not that "the apothecaries gained the sympathy of the public by remaining at their posts during the great plague of London in 1665."

Kings, Queens and even Popes are among the "royal and noble pharmacists" mentioned and many are the remedies invented or used by them and still found in the *Materia Medica*. While the reader can decide for himself as to how much the prestige and prominence of the maker and user had to do with the reputation of the remedy there is no doubt but that at that time as perhaps even to-day the favor of a royal personage, a merchant prince or even a well-known and favorite dame brought wealth and notoriety to the prescriber and grafted the remedy on our *Materia Medica* there to remain for decades and perhaps centuries.

With a few chapters showing the intimate relationship between "Ancient Pharmacy and Poisons" and the credulity of the public regarding the "Poisons and their Antidotes," a chapter is devoted to the "Noted Nostrums" of the past and we are told of some of the achievements of the pharmacy of to-day.

Will say that this is a most interesting and entertaining work that all will read with pleasure and with profit.

A. L. L.

REGARDING MALPRACTICE DEFENSE BY THE STATE SOCIETY.

A recent malpractice suit for \$50,000 in Los Angeles draws attention to the following facts:

1. In this recent suit, one of the "private companies" acted so queerly, that it was not even represented in the defense.

2. The burden of the defense rested on the Attorney for the Medical Society of the State of California.

3. The jury took only twenty minutes to award a verdict in favor of the doctor who was sued.

Conclusions: Malpractice defense by the Medical Society of the State of California is absolutely efficient. If you wish to donate \$10 or \$15 to a private company (organized for profits only), that is your business, but it would be more altruistic to donate it to the building fund of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.—Bulletin of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.